

**Red May
and the
Physiognomy
of
Social Revolution:
The Story
of the
Chicago Martyrs**

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In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act

Red May: Tragedy and Resurgence

“Chicago Swells the Surging Throng.”

From 1887, down to the year before the outbreak of the world war, it was the custom, in Anarchist circles, to commemorate, every 11th of November, the death of the Chicago Martyrs. That day was dedicated, after 1918, to the fraud and farce of capitalist armistice celebration, until the second world war ended such tributes to the dead of 1914-18. In proletarian circles the Russian revolution anniversary dwarfed the importance of the Chicago commemoration. The worth of that revolution was liquidated somewhat by the retreat to capitalism via the New Economic Policy. Events must pass into history, however, and decline as mere celebrations. This fate has overtaken the memory of the Chicago Martyrs. We celebrate their deaths no more. We no longer make a saints' day of it. But we record it as a passage of Socialist history, a chapter of proletarian struggle.

May, even more than March, is Labour's Red Month. It is the month of warmth, life, and beauty, the magic month of sunshine and rebirth, of colour and abundance, of energy and song. Because of its rich, warm call to life it is the month of labour. May is a satire on capitalist society, an irony on wage-slavery. It calls to active revolutionary opposition to the present economic order, and bids the proletariat awake to a knowledge of its economic might. Then shall we witness a real month of May, a month of labour at harmony with nature, an epoch of harmony in place of our present discord. The Sun, in all his glory, will shine no more on masters and slaves, on palaces and hovels, but on a world of freemen and freewomen, citizens of the earth, active, co-operative, and equal.

Fifty-one years have passed since the Paris Congress, at the suggestion of the American Knights of Labour, decided on the May Day demonstration. The idea was to symbolise the direct struggle of Labour against Capitalism, to usher in the social battle, to sound the note of victory. The symbolism has been crushed by economic conditions, and the call of May has lost its psychological significance. This was inevitable. Symbolism cannot satisfy for ever. The struggle towards emancipation is something more than a mere parade. The true import and essence of the May idea was lost when the parade became accepted. It menaced parliamentary careerism and so the opportunist parliamentary leaders falsified the meaning of the celebration. They liquidated its energy. To them the germinating of spring, the symbol of awakening labour, was an omen of evil. And so they dulled the workers' enthusiasm,

and advised, with lying tongue in cheek, that they would gain all those things to which they aspired just as soon as they made an effective demonstration at the ballot box. The First of May was to end in a voters' parade.

And so parliamentarism, which has liquidated Socialism, has abolished May Day and the energy of the May call. Parliament is the enemy of Labour and of Spring. The First of May is no longer celebrated by the workers. "What's the use of stopping work on this day and demonstrating," the professional politicians, the parliamentary careerists, ask in a tone of disdainful wisdom. These folk dislike disturbance and inconvenience because they sense their own growing importance under capitalism, and want the social and political machinery to work harmoniously to their own individual advancement, and the more complete enslavement of the vast herd of voting, trusting proletarians. So the First of May has come to be, sometimes, Sunday, April 30; and at others, Sunday, May 2, and so on. Only by the connivance of the calendar is May Day now celebrated on May Day.

But we would revive May Day, not as a day of useless celebration, but as a call-day to revolution. We would make an epic of the day, so that it should fire men's blood, and make it white hot with the flame of true enthusiasm. What more fitting theme can we select to achieve this end, unless it be the story of the Communards because of their number as well as courage, than the record of the Chicago Martyrs?

It is no isolated message this message of Chicago. If it were it would not be a message of Maytime. It is only one of the many great tragedies that have been concluded in the name of class domination and authority. Not in the execution of four innocent men in the name of capitalist law and bourgeois ethic, but in the manner of their passing, does the inspiration for later labourers in the cause of freedom lie. It is well, then, that we should consider the story of their witnessing against capitalism, the better to realise how the shedding of their blood but served to fertilise the seed of human liberty.

On May the First, 1886, the Eight Hours Day Association of Chicago proclaimed a general strike in that city, as a prelude to the inauguration of the eight hours day throughout the United States of America. A mass meeting was convened at the Haymarket, at which Spies, Parsons, Fielden, and Schwab addressed twenty-five thousand strikers. Whilst pointing out that, short of Socialism, all was illusion, the speakers believed, mistakenly in our opinion, that it was their duty to encourage the revolutionary spirit implied in the movement. We consider it merely a movement of adaptation and reformism and not a revolutionary movement. In all such movements the revolutionary tendency of the workers, and their power of solidarity and extent of class conscious thought, is exaggerated.

On May the third, at a meeting attended by about fifty thousand strikers, stones were thrown at some "strike-breakers" employed at the M'Cormick's Reaper Works. Police arrived on the scene in large numbers and used their revolvers, killing six strikers and wounding others. Burning with indignation, Spies rushed back to the *Arbeiter Zeitung* office, and wrote the "Revenge" circular. This was a very human, an all too human document. And it unquestionably rendered Spies life forfeit after the events of the following day, once the ruling class had decided on the victimisation of the Anarchists. To our mind, it would have been wiser for Spies not to have written this circular. But who shall say? Against the folly of calling upon the workers to revenge deaths they had not the class conscious power or indignation to avenge, against the pettiness of revenge as compared with the abolition of class society and the misery it naturally entails, there remains the fact that good red blood surged through the veins of Spies, that his deep resentment of the wrong inflicted on the poor rose in revolt, and he dared to protest. The nervous excitement of his words we consider of small avail, but the courage of his protest we deem an inspiration. If he wrote foolishly, he died boldly, and the silence that resulted was more powerful than aught he wrote or spoke. Events are mankind's teachers: and the name of Spies is the equivalent of an imperishable lesson. No man can ask higher fame than that.

The circular related the death of the six strikers. It described the police as "bloodhounds." It denounced "the factory lords" as "lazy thieving masters." It urged:—

"Revenge! Working men to arms! . . . If you are men, if you are the sons of your grandsires who have shed their blood to free you, then you will rise in your might, Hercules, and destroy the hideous monster that seeks to destroy you! To arms! We call you to arms!—Your Brothers."

Alas! foolish words of righteous indignation, words of weakness and not of strength, stumbling forth, somehow, to advance the cause of working class emancipation, in a confused tortuous way. Words not to be censured without consideration, but to be judged in relation to the conditions that called them forth! Words not to be censured by those who caused the strikers to be murdered or afterwards upheld the murder of men against whose life they had conspired.

Spies was familiar with poverty-stricken hunger demonstrations, police brutalities, and the record of riotous, complacent self-indulgence by the wealthy class. Only the year before this fatal May Day, the *Chicago Times* suggested, editorially, that the farmers who were pestered with unemployed workers, turned tramps, during the winter of 1884-5, should poison them with strychnine in the food provided them. The *Chicago Tribune* vied with the *Times* in upholding the rights of the Vanderbilts and the Goulds

against the working-class movement during this period of intensified class struggle and appalling proletarian misery.

Jay Gould had gathered wealth by fraud, and maintained it, and was maintaining it, by outrage and violence in Missouri, New York, Schuylkill, and Hocking Valley, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, etc. A quarter of a century previous he had been a needy punter in gold operations. Now he controlled railroads, telegraphs, news agencies, legislatures, and the entire lives of thousands of men who worked on his various lines. He had qualified for the position of "Napoleon of Finance" by colossal roguery. And he maintained it by lying impertinence and callous brutality.

Jay Gould's hired journalists blamed the eight hours and all other labour agitation on to foreign conspirators and called for extreme action in behalf of "public opinion." But "public opinion" mattered little to these millionaire interests except to the extent that it was manufactured by them and served as their ramification: Petty respectability, and its puny void of conscience, was an excellent cur to set barking at the feet of Anarchists. But the millionaire controllers of the cur were more willing to kick it than to humour it.

Once, when confronted with criticism, W. H. Vanderbilt said: "The public be damned." His father, the old Commodore, when remonstrated with for treating the passengers on his railroad as if they were hogs, answered: "By God, sir, I wish they was hogs."

With such conditions oppressing the worker, violence was inseparable from the desperation that dictated the daily industrial reformist struggle of the workers. In 1880, that is six years before events dictated Spies "revenge" circular, H. M. Hyndman, who certainly had no sympathy with either Anarchism or propaganda by deed, predicted, as a result of a tour in the United States, in the *Fortnightly Review*, that a conflict between capital and labour was brewing in America, which might attain to the dimensions of a civil war.

The *New York Tribune*, then Jay Gould's own paper, extracted some passages, and headed them with the lying comment: "England sends many fool travellers to the United States, but never such a fool as this one."

Hyndman was right. The facts were with him. But the Gould interests did not want those facts broadcast.

The eight hours movement of 1886, the economic boycotting movement, and the strike on the Gould railroad were opposed vigorously by Powderly, the Chief of the Knights of Labour. This fact will acquit him of the charge of exterminism. Yet, in the year 1880, Powderly expressed himself in these terms about preparations for strikes.

"I am anxious that each of our lodges should be provided with powder and shot, bullets and Winchester rifles, when we intend to

strike. If you strike the troops are called out to put you down. You cannot fight with bare hands. You must consider the matter very seriously, and if we anticipate strikes we must prepare to fight and to use arms against the forces brought against us."

It is clear, from these facts, that Spies wrote his "revenge" circular, not because he was an Anarchist, but because the idea of violence was impressed upon the working class movement throughout the United States by the very lawlessness of which the workers were the victims. The idea of violence was inevitable.

The circular was distributed widely and a committee of action meeting called that night. Waller, who turned informer, was chairman. Engel and Fischer were present. The events of the afternoon were discussed and it was decided to call a mass meeting of protest at the Haymarket next night. This meeting proved a fatal one for all concerned.

The meeting was quiet and orderly. Spies, Fischer, Engel, Fielden, and Parsons spoke. The Mayor of Chicago, who attended for the purpose of dispersing the meeting should the need arise, went over to the police station and told Captain Bondfield that he had better give orders to his reserves to go home.

The crowd had dwindled to 1,500 persons, Parsons and his family had gone home deeming the protest at an end, and Fielden was concluding the meeting. One hundred and eighty police—rightly termed by Marx, the civil bourgeois guard—turned out of the station, and marched upon the meeting with loaded rifles and in fighting formation. The captain of the first row of police had just ordered the meeting to disperse, and his men, without waiting a reply, were advancing to the attack, when a small fiery body arched through the air, alighted between the first and second companies of the police, and exploded with a loud report. Sixty policemen were wounded badly, seven were mortally wounded, and one, E. J. Degan, was killed.

Firing by the police became general and the people scattered in all directions, the police firing at random as they pursued.

A reign of terror ensued. Persons suspected of Socialist or Anarchist opinions were arrested right and left, private houses were broken into without warrants, and ransacked for Socialist literature. The Haymarket speakers, except Parsons, who had left Chicago, were arrested. In Chicago, Milwaukee, and New York, Socialists and Labour organisers were hunted and imprisoned just because they were connected with the Labour movement. Socialist and Labour papers were submitted to a police censorship and their presses broken up. Everybody connected with the *Alarm* and *Arbeiter Zeitung*—including printers, writers and office-boys—were imprisoned on a charge of murder. A newspaper campaign, virtually a campaign of murder, was conducted against Socialists and Anarchists, and all proletarian agitation was checked. Jay Gould's hired journalists blamed the Chicago rioting on foreign conspirators and

carefully ignored the fact that this description could hardly apply to Parsons and Fielden, the two principal orators on that occasion.

The Parsons family had played a conspicuous part in English speaking rebel movements since 1600, but time had honoured and condoned those movements. Albert Parsons was of the same stock as the General Parsons of 1776 Revolution fame and the Captain Parsons of Bunker Hill. On his mother's side also he was of American Revolution stock. Circumstances made him the most outstanding victim of this capitalist agitation. He was an excellent martyr but a rather strange foreigner.

On the 17th May, 1886, the Grand Jury came together.

"The body is a strong one," telegraphed Gould's hired penman to his New York daily, "and it is safe to aver that Anarchy and murder will not receive much quarter at the hands of the men composing it."

It is in times of crisis that the shivering mediocrity and despicable abjectness of respectability becomes so marked. Reaction, dictated reaction, organised anti-social interest triumphed, and termed its triumph public opinion. The poor creatures of the Grand Jury were flattered into importance by Gould's thugs of the pen; and the more the creatures swelled, the more they aired their opinions, the emptier and the more despicable they became.

The word "strong," applied to such a body, shows to what degraded use words may be turned. Well are we reminded of Paine's indictment of the trade of governing, and, little as we may agree with him, of the magnificently true words of irony and reproach addressed by Ravachol to the jury that condemned him.

The indictment contained sixty-nine counts. It charged the defendants, August Spies, Michael Schwab, Samuel Fielden, Albert R. Parsons, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, Louis Lingg, Oscar W. Neebe, Rudolph Schnaubelt, and William Selinger with the murder of E. J. Degan.

Schnaubelt, who disappeared mysteriously and completely, and seems to have been the agent employed by the authorities to accomplish this wholesale murder and so secure for a time the triumph of reaction, was not in the hands of the police. Parsons surrendered in Court, on June 21, 1886, when the empannelling of the jury before Judge Joseph E. Gary began. This lasted twenty-one days.

On July 15, States Attorney Grinnell began his address. He charged the defendants with murder and conspiracy and promised to show who threw the bomb. He did not do so.

The most important witnesses for the State were Waller, Schrader, and Seliger, former comrades of the defendants, turned informers from fear of the gallows and hope of gain. Waller was to prove the conspiracy to throw the bomb at the Haymarket. He admitted that the police were not expected at the Haymarket. He confessed that not one word was said about a bomb or dynamite when it was resolved to call the Haymarket meeting.

Schrader was to confirm Waller's story of the defendants' guilt. But his testimony was so unfavourable to the State that the Assistant Attorney, losing his temper exclaimed to the defendants' lawyers: "He is your witness not ours."

The attempt of the State to connect the defendants with the Haymarket bomb completely broke down. But the fact remained that they had spoken strong words against the existing system and had been driven by their indignation to proclaim their belief in violence. Girls had been clubbed to death by the police and the workers had been shot down for the "crime" of assembling at a public meeting. Of course, the defendants, having red blood in their veins, were indignant. But their words were no evidence that they threw or conspired to throw a bomb.

To stupid respectability, apart from the menace to private property society, of their words and attitude, they were condemned by the fact that there were seven policemen dead and sixty wounded. But the class that was prepared to send these agitators to their death thought nothing of a few policemen. Agitators and policemen alike were sacrificed to make a capitalist joy-day.

The jury returned a verdict on August 20:

"We, the jury, find the defendants, August Spies, Michael Schwab, Samuel Fielden, Albert Parsons, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, and Louis Lingg guilty of murder in the manner and form as charged in the indictment, and fix the penalty at death. We find the defendant, Oscar W. Neebe, guilty of murder in the manner and form as charged in the indictment, and fix the penalty at imprisonment in the penitentiary for fifteen years."

A new trial was refused. An appeal was made to the Supreme Court of Illinois without avail.

Time passes, and the next act of the tragedy is enacted in Judge Gary's court on October 7, 8, and 9, 1886, when the now historical figures of the agitation addressed the court in reference to the question of sentence.

Dignified in bearing, his handsome face now lighted up with satire, bold, defiant, and fluent in delivery, Spies indicts the perjury and conspiracy of the prosecution. His speech is rich in history, philosophy, and piquant, unwelcome truth.

Schwab also exposes the conspiracy of law and order against the life and liberty of the proletarian agitator.

Neebe follows, only to regret that he is deprived by the verdict of the jury, of the honour of dying.

Fischer, erect in bearing, is his successor; and he is proud to die for the cause of the people.

Lingg speaks in German. His is the passion of youth. He is proudly defiant and fiercely calm. His utterance is impassioned. "I do believe in force: hang me for it!" he declared.

Engel speaks easily and quietly. His is the calm stolidity of the stoic.

Then follow lengthy speeches from Fielden and Parsons.

Moderate in manner, Fielden's speech is telling as an indictment of the prosecution. Grinnell, the State Attorney, declared "had it been made to the jury they would have acquitted him." Luther Laflin Mills, formerly State Attorney, declared it to be a masterpiece.

The intense power and latent passion of Parsons' speech rightly entitles it to be deemed a brilliant agitation speech—the most powerful effort of a formidable propagandist.

It was known that, under no circumstances, would the death sentence be commuted in the case of Spies, Fischer, Engel, and Lingg. But it was intended to commute the sentence to one of imprisonment in the case of Parsons, Schwab, and Fielden. Under the constitution and statutes of the State of Illinois, it was prescribed, as a condition of the exercise of his pardoning power by the Governor, that the convicted person must sign a petition for the exercise of executive clemency. Fielden and Schwab signed a petition and were pardoned by Governor Oglesby, the death sentence being commuted to imprisonment for fifteen years. Although repeated pressure was brought to bear upon him by his friends and counsel, Parsons refused to sign the petition necessary to reprieve.

State Attorney Grinnell, anticipating conformity with the statute, declared of the prisoners: "I want to make them do something for which the Anarchists shall hate them."

But Parsons, paying the cost with his life, denied him the pleasure. He defeated Grinnell: and the latter now stands at the bar of history, indicted by the memory of man, a figure like unto that of the state attorneys of all times and climes, poor, shrivelled, snivelling soul. All tribute is paid to the memory of the man who died on the gallows rather than desert his comrades. What matter the laws of Illinois and the executive clemencies of governor against this fact of sterling manhood in the dock and on the gallows! What matter statutes and constitutions when character weighs them down!

Captain W. P. Black, leading Advocate for the Defence, made strenuous efforts to have Parsons save himself. So did Melville E. Stone, editor of the *Daily News*.

On Sunday, November 6, 1887, the latter spent two hours in Parsons' cell, urging him to sign the petition, and promising the full support of his paper in favour of the commutation of the death sentence. Parsons refused to petition. He was determined either to hang with his comrades, Lingg, Engel, Fischer, and Spies, or to save them.

Two days later, Black paid a special visit to Parsons and pleaded for his signature in vain. Black added that refusal to sign the petition meant execution.

Parsons replied:—

"I will not do it. My mind is firmly and irrevocably made up, and I beg you urge me no further upon the subject. I am an innocent man—innocent of this offence of which I have been found guilty by the jury, and the world knows my innocence. If I am to be executed at all it is because I am an Anarchist, not because I am a murderer; it is because of what I have taught and spoken and written in the past, and not because of the throwing of the Haymarket bomb. I can afford to be hung for the sake of the ideas I hold and the cause I have espoused, if the people of Illinois can afford to hang an innocent man who voluntarily placed himself in their power. . . .

"If I should now separate myself from Lingg, Engel and Fischer, and sign a petition upon which the governor could commute my sentence, I know that it would mean absolute doom to the others—that Lingg, Engel and Fischer would be inevitably hung. So I have determined to make their cause and their fate my own.

"I know the chances are 999 in 1000 that I will swing with them; that there isn't one chance in a thousand of saving them, but if they can be saved at all it is my standing with them, so that whatever action is taken on my case must be taken, with equal propriety in theirs. I will not, therefore, do anything that will separate me from them. I expect that the result will be that I will hang with them, but I am ready."

Black could make no reply to this argument. He took Parsons by the hand, looked into his face, and said to him: "Your action is worthy of you." He then came away.

He went to Springfield and saw Governor Oglesby on the Wednesday morning. The latter insisted on technical compliance with the law. Parsons must petition.

Black telegraphed Parsons to this effect. When Parsons received the telegram he placed it upon his cell table and beside it—the "Marseillaise"! That was his answer.

Black returned from Springfield that night and had his last interview with Parsons on Thursday morning. He saw also his companions, Lingg, Fischer, Engel, and Spies. They knew that they could not save themselves by signing a petition. But they were willing to do so, and so brand themselves as cowards if Parsons would sign, and so save himself.

Black had no heart to press Parsons to sign, since that would "do violence to the noble purposes he had framed." Parsons said to him, "as simply and as quietly as he could have spoken in reference to some matter of no consequence": "I can't do it, Captain; I am ready for whatever may come."

Black shook his hand and turned away.

That night Black went to Springfield again: and Parsons, in his cell in Cook County Jail, sang the song his singing has made an immortal symbol of the Labour struggle: "Annie Laurie."

On the Friday morning, Black vainly urged Governor Oglesby to grant a reprieve for thirty days to enable him to adduce further proof that the convicted Anarchists had no complicity in the bomb throwing.

About the same time, Parsons received from Josephine Tilton the following telegram: "Not goodbye, but hail, brothers! From the gallows trap the march shall be taken up. I will listen for the beating of the drum."

That day Parsons declaimed his last words from the gallows: "Let me speak, oh men of America! Will you let me speak, Sheriff Matson? Let the voice of the people be heard! Oh——"

"The drum tap," said Benj. R. Tucker, in pursuing Josephine Tilton's analogy to its logical conclusion, "has sounded; the forlorn hope has charged; the needed breach has been opened; myriads are falling into line; if we will but make the most of the opportunity so dearly purchased, the victory will be ours. It shall be; it must be."

Shortly after the execution, Pauline Brandes, a sister of Waller, made a sworn affidavit before Judge Eberhardt, upsetting the whole of her brother's testimony, and denouncing it as perjury.

In November, 1892, the Chicago police wrecked Grief's Hall, and broke up two peaceful meetings, arresting many persons against whom no charges could be brought, on the ground of alleged Anarchism. The result was that they had to pay 700 dollars damages, and the whole question of the Chicago Martyrs was reopened. The *Chicago Herald* unearthed the following facts:—

After the fatal Haymarket meeting, May 4, 1886, some three hundred leading American Capitalists met secretly to plan the destruction of the militant labour movement. They formed the "Citizens' Association," and subscribed 100,000 dollars in a few hours. This money secured the condemnation of the eight Chicago Anarchists. A like sum was guaranteed to the police and their agents every year; but in October, 1892, things being quiet, the subscriptions dropped off. Hence the police endeavoured to revive the Anarchist scare.

Judge Gary was moved by these exposures to publish an apology in the *Century Magazine* for April, 1893. Never was the proverb, "He who excuses himself, accuses himself" better exemplified.

Finally, in June, 1893, the recently elected Governor of Illinois, John P. Altgeld, having thoroughly examined the evidence against the eight convicted Anarchists, decided to set the three prisoners, Neebe, Fielden, and Schwab, unconditionally free, as being the victims of false imprisonment. The jury which had tried them had been, in his opinion, packed; the jurors legally incompetent; the judge partial; the evidence insufficient. His conduct having been violently resented by a section of the American capitalist press, Altgeld published a pamphlet giving his reasons and containing interesting particulars of the struggle between Capitalists and Workers in 1886.

The facts related by Altgeld constitute a valuable lesson as to the sort of justice to be expected by revolutionists in a thoroughly

democratic State, when the possessing class is scared by the misery it has created, and public opinion is merely the daily manufacture of a venal press. So long as this press functions, and function it will as long as capitalism continues, how poor a thing is parliamentarism!

Altgeld demonstrated, beyond the shadow of doubt, that the Chicago martyrs were the victims of ruling class hatred, put out of the way by the force and fraud of the profit-mongers and power lovers, who feared them.

His tardy revelation revives our faith in the struggle. We turn from the drab despair of chill November to the warmth and promise of May. After all, the message of Chicago is the message of May. Responding to its call of freedom and struggle, we recall the words of grim promise uttered by Proudhon:—"Like the Nemesis of old, whom neither prayers nor threats could move, the revolution advances, with sombre and inevitable tread over the flowers with which its devotees strew its path, through the blood of its champions, and over the bodies of its enemies."

Chicago's Red Martyrs

"For the nineteenth century has produced these men — men who bowed at no shrine, acknowledged no God, believed in no hereafter, and yet went as proudly and triumphantly to the gallows as ever did Christian martyr of old."

—VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE, November, 1895.

"Let no attempt be made to avert the final tragedy of the 11th November, make no effort to avenge our deaths."

—Statement issued by condemned Anarchists
a few days before execution.

HANGED 11TH NOVEMBER, 1887.

ALBERT R. PARSONS.—Born 24th June, 1848, at Montgomery, Alabama. Orphaned. Adopted by his brother, Major-General W. H. Parsons, of the Confederate Army, and educated at the latter's home, Tyler, Texas, 1853. Printer's apprentice, 1859. Joined the Confederate Army, 1861. Established a weekly newspaper at Waco, Texas, 1868. This failed, and he became travelling correspondent for the *Houston Daily Telegraph*. Identified himself with Republican Party, and became Secretary of the State Senate under the Federal Government. Married daughter of an Indian chief, at Houston, in 1872. Discarded by his brother and friends in consequence. Migrated to Chicago in 1873. Interested himself in Socialism, 1874. Joined the Knights of Labour, 1876. Participated in the Great Railway Strike and brutally treated by police, 1877. Worked as compositor and journalist, but suffered repeated victimisation for his radical opinions. Two years without any regular work and his family suffered much privation. Left the parliamentary Labour party. Delegate to the Labour Congress, where the International Working People's Association was founded on Anarchist Communist Principles, 1881. Edited *Alarm*, 1884, to its suppression in May, 1886. Indicted for conspiracy same month and voluntarily surrendered himself in Judge Gary's Court, June 21 of that year.

Lombroso complained that Parsons lacked moral sensibility, because, at an Anarchist meeting, he said: "Strangle the spies, and throw them out of the windows."

ADOLPH FISCHER.—Born Bremen, Germany, 1860. Educated at a common school. Emigrated to America, 1875, and learned the printing trade at Nashville, Ten., in the office of a German paper conducted by his brother. Acquired an interest in a German paper at Little Rock, Ark. Moved to St. Louis, where he married, worked at the case and became known for his extreme Socialism, 1881. Migrated to Chicago, where he worked on the German paper *Anarchist*, and found employment as a compositor in the office of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. He was a stern, zealous, and uncompromising revolutionist, and had received an early insight into the rottenness

of society from his father, who was a member of the Socialist Party of Bremen.

Interviewed by Black, in the Cook County Jail, immediately after the verdict, Fischer said:—"I am ready to die for the cause of the people."

His last words were: "Hurrah for Anarchy! This is the happiest moment of my life."

Dyer D. Lum commented on them at the time as follows:—

"In so exalted a state were they (the four Anarchists), sure that death by the gallows was but a means of spreading further into the hearts of the people they loved the ideas apart from which they had no life, that it was exactly the truth when Fischer said: 'This is the happiest moment of my life.' And those who saw his face say it shone with a white light on the scaffold."

AUGUST THEODORE VINCENT SPIES.—Born on 10th December, 1855, at Freidwald, Germany. Son of a forester, at that time in Germany, a Government official. Educated by private tutors for the Polytechnicum, where he studied the science of forest culture. Adopted his father's profession. Had read all the great German classics, studied Kant and Hegel, and became a religious sceptic, 1869. Abandoned his studies and decided to join his relatives in America, 1871, owing to the death of his father. Learned the upholstery trade in New York. Proceeded to Chicago, October, 1872. Joined the Socialist Labour Party, 1876. Became a Socialist candidate and believed in parliamentary action till 1880, when he became editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*. Repudiated parliamentarism for the economic struggle only. Unmarried. Supported his mother and sister.

Knowing that it would be rejected so far as he was concerned, Spies signed the petition to Governor Oglesby, in the hope that it would influence Parsons to petition. His letter to Oglesby was characteristic. He said that he realised fully that popular sentiment demanded somewhat in the nature of retribution for the loss of life at the Haymarket: and some sacrifice has to be made to that overwhelming public demand. That historic event had made shipwreck of the movement in which he and his comrades were engaged, and to which they had devoted and were devoting their every energy. It would be realised, therefore, that they were free of any intentional responsibility. He pleaded with Governor Oglesby, therefore, to extend executive clemency to his comrades in the trial and judgment, and to let him (Spies) be the sacrifice of the hour.

Spies' last words were: "There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle to-day."

GEORGE ENGEL.—Born 15th April, 1836, Cassel, Germany. His father, a mason and bricklayer, died whilst George was still an infant. His mother, with four young children to keep, struggled on against poverty. She died when he was twelve. Experienced hunger and starvation till a Frankford painter taught him his trade

and gave him a home during his apprenticeship. Emigrated to Philadelphia, 1873. Saw the American militia employed against starving miners. Fell sick and lost his savings. Migrated to Chicago; studied socialism and became an Anarchist. Saw the ballot-box actually stolen and "corrected" after a Chicago election, wherein the Social Democrats had a majority of votes. Courts refused to cancel the election thus secured. Was one of the most active workers in the International Working People's Association.

Engel was brought to the study of Socialism through active Anti-Socialist propaganda. After his first arrest he was released on the good word of Coroner Herg, who declared that he had known Engel for years as a quiet and well-behaved citizen.

Engel, on the scaffold, triumphantly exclaimed: "Hurrah for Anarchy!"

COMMITTED SUICIDE? 10TH NOVEMBER, 1887.

LOUIS LINGG.—Born Schwetzingen, Germany, 9th September, 1866. Apprentice to a carpenter. Emigrated to America, 1885. Went to Chicago; joined the union of his trade, and became one of the chief organisers of the eight-hour movement. Believed that the great revolutionary struggle was at hand, and that the people needed arms to meet the open violence of their oppressors. Studied explosives and made a supply of bombs for use in case of need. Is supposed to have blown himself up in his cell.

RELEASED UNCONDITIONALLY, AS BEING THE VICTIMS OF FALSE IMPRISONMENT, JUNE, 1893.

SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT.

OSCAR NEEBE.—Born in Philadelphia, of German parents, 1850. Had established a prosperous business in Chicago, in the sale of yeast to grocers and traders. Identified himself with the cause of the working people and exerted himself on its behalf day and night with untiring energy. Knew nothing of Haymarket meeting. Shortly after his sentence of fifteen years' imprisonment, his wife died of anxiety. Neebe was permitted a last look at her remains under official escort.

DEATH SENTENCE COMMUTED ON PETITION TO 15 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT.

SAMUEL FIELDEN.—Born on 25th February, 1847, at Todmorden, Lancashire. His father was a weaver by trade, a man of fine physique and more than average intelligence, who took part in the Chartist movement without becoming very prominent in it. He was related to Fielden, the Chartist orator, who secured some distinction as M.P., a founder of the Consumers Co-operative Society, and a prime mover in the Society of Oddfellows. This Fielden agitated the question of agricultural lands for working men in Britain. It can be easily understood, therefore, that the Fielden

house on Sunday was the meeting place of an advanced group of persons who discussed various social subjects. These meetings first gave him his taste for the study of Sociology.

Spent a number of years in a cotton mill. Became a Sunday School teacher, and becoming a religious enthusiast, perambulated the towns of Lancashire as a Methodist preacher.

Emigrated to America in 1868, settling in New York. Went to Chicago, 1869, then to Arkansas and Louisiana, where he worked at railroad construction. Returned to Chicago and worked as teamster in handling stone, 1871. Had continued his preaching but realised, in Chicago, that something was wrong. Joined the Liberal League, 1880. Converted to Socialism by George Schilling.

On his release by Altgeld, settled with his wife and children on a farm in Colorado.

Three days before the execution of Parsons, Spies, Fischer, and Engel, Judge Joseph E. Gary forwarded the petition of Fielden to the Hon. Richard J. Oglesby, Governor of Illinois, with a covering letter stating that Fielden was "the honest, industrious, and peaceable labouring man," with "a natural love of justice, an impatience at all undeserved suffering, an impulsive temper," and "an advocate of force as a heroic remedy for the hardships that the poor endure."

Urging that Fielden should benefit by the extension of executive clemency, Gary added:—

"As there is no evidence that he knew of any preparation to do the specific act of throwing the bomb that killed Degan, he does not understand even now that general advice to large masses to do violence makes him responsible for the violence done by reason of that advice, nor that being joined by others in an effort to subvert law and order by force makes him responsible for the acts of those others tending to make that effort effectual."

That paragraph is priceless, as representing the argument put forward against capitalist society by the men who stood for propaganda by deed, when told that not all the wealthy folk were consciously responsible for the outraging of the poor by capitalist conditions.

MICHAEL SCHWAB.—Born in Kitzingen, Central Germany, 9th August, 1853. Father a small tradesman. Lost both parents, 1866. Became a communicant and then lost all faith because of the worldly habits of his priest, 1867. Schiller's works and other German classics dispelled his religious illusions. Apprenticed to a bookbinder in Wuerrburg. Led a solitary life surrounded only by books. Journeyman, 1872. Joined the Socialist Labour Party and travelled through Europe distributing Socialist literature, and living by his trade. Emigrated to America, 1879. Settled in Chicago, 1880. Became reporter and assistant editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung*.

Schwab, on his release, embraced Social Democracy. Died, 29th June, 1898, in Chicago, of consumption, which disease he had contracted in prison.

The Chicago Anarchists' Programme

Albert R. Parsons, writing in the *Alarm*, for December, 1885, defined his attitude towards the eight hours' day agitation thus:—

"We of the Internationale are frequently asked why we do not give our active support to the proposed eight-hour movement. Let us take what we can get, say our eight-hour friends, else by asking too much we may get nothing. We answer: Because we will not compromise.

"Either our position that capitalists have no right to the exclusive ownership of the means of life is a true one, or it is not. If we are correct, then to concede the point that capitalists have the right to eight hours of our labour, is more than a compromise; it is a virtual confession that the wage system is right.

"If capitalists have the right to own labour or to control the results of labour, we have no business dictating the terms upon which we may be employed. We cannot say to our employers, 'Yes, we acknowledge your right to employ us, we are satisfied that the wage system is all right, but we, your slaves, propose to dictate the terms upon which we will work.' How inconsistent!

"And yet that is exactly the position of our eight-hour friends. They presume to dictate to capital, while they maintain the justness of the capitalistic system; they would regulate wages while defending the claims of the capitalists to the absolute control of industry."

The position adopted by Parsons in 1885 is that adopted by the Anti-Parliamentary Communist movement in Britain since 1906. It defines the Anti-Parliamentarian opposition to the Syndicalist movement and also to the Communist Party Minority movement.

August Spies defined his opposition in these terms:—

"We do not antagonise the eight-hour movement. Viewing it from the standpoint that it is a social struggle, we simply predict that it is a lost battle, and we will prove that, even though the eight-hour system should be established at this late day, the wage-workers would gain nothing. They would still remain the slaves of their masters.

"Suppose the hours of labour should be shortened to eight, our productive capacity would thereby not be diminished. The shortening of the hours of labour in England was immediately followed by a general increase of labour-saving machines, with a subsequent discharge of a proportionate number of employees. The reverse of what had been sought took place. The exploitation of those at work was intensified. They now performed more labour, and produced more than before."

The programme on which our Chicago comrades took their stand was agreed to at an Anarchist Congress convened in Pittsburgh, May, 1883. It was as follows:—

- "1. Destruction of the existing class rule by all means, *i.e.*, by energetic, relentless, revolutionary, and international action.
- "2. Establishment of a free Society based upon a co-operative system of production.
- "3. Free exchange of equivalent products, by and between the productive organisations, without commerce and profit-mongery.
- "4. Organisation of education on a secular, scientific and equal basis for both sexes.
- "5. Equal rights for all, without distinction of sex or race.
- "6. Regulation of all public affairs by free contracts between the autonomous independent communes and associations, resting on a federalistic basis."

This declaration of principles was subsequently published in Chicago. It immediately roused the wrath of the Trust magnates and their kept press, who called for drastic police suppression. This campaign found its climax in the tragedy of May, 1886, and the executions of November, 1887.

JOSEPH DIETZGEN'S STAND

Joseph Dietzgen, famous for his association with Karl Marx and Ludwig Fuerbach, and his philosophical essays, was editing the Socialist Party organ, *Der Socialist*, at the time of the Chicago demonstrations, bomb throwing and arrests.

Dietzgen was born in Blakenberg, near Cologne, on December 8, 1828. He died in Chicago in April, 1888, and was buried on the seventeenth of that month by the side of the murdered Anarchists.

He emigrated to America in June, 1849, and worked there for two years as journeyman tanner, painter, and teacher, and travelled by tramping or on canal boats, from Wisconsin in the North to the Gulf of Mexico in the South, and from the Hudson in the East to the Mississippi in the West. He returned to Germany in 1851, but again emigrated to America eight years later, remaining only two years. He returned to the States for the third and last time in June, 1884. He was offered immediately the editorship of *Der Sozialist* and retained it until he moved to Chicago in 1886.

When Spies and his comrades of the *Chicago Arbeiterzeitung* were arrested, Dietzgen temporarily assumed the editorship, and remained a contributor to the time of his death.

Prior to the fatal Chicago meeting, Dietzgen had been attacked bitterly by Spies for his old-fashioned and ornamental style. But after the bomb had been exploded, and the reaction set in, when men were denying being "Socialists" even, Dietzgen came forward and offered his services free of charge to such of the publishers as stood their ground. This was on May 6. He had lost no time and wanted no pay.

He offered his services, as he explained, because he considered it his duty to jump into the breach and fill the places of those comrades who had been torn out of the ranks of fighters, and because he considered it necessary that the Chicago workers should not be without an organ in those trying times. His offer was accepted and two weeks later he became chief editor of three papers: *Arbeiterzeitung*; *Falkel*; and *Vorbote*.

For this loyalty to the struggle, Dietzgen was assailed by friend and foe. His point of view, however, was made clear in a letter he wrote a fortnight before the Haymarket meeting, and another that he wrote about a fortnight after it.

On April 20, he wrote to a friend living in the East of the United States:

"For my part, I lay little stress on the distinction, whether a man is an anarchist or a socialist, because it seems to me that too much weight is attributed to this difference. While the anarchists

may have mad and brainless individualists in their ranks, the socialists have an abundance of cowards. For this reason I care as much for the one as the other. The majority in both camps are still in great need of education, and this will bring about a reconciliation in good time."

On May 17, 1886, he wrote:—

"I was of the opinion that the difference between socialists and anarchists should not be exaggerated, and when the bomb exploded, and the staff of the *Arbeiterzeitung* were imprisoned, I at once offered my services, which were accepted."

Dietzgen was invited by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Labour Party to write articles on the Chicago situation for the *Sozialist*. But his report on the Haymarket riot was rejected, because "it was diametrically opposed to the views of the Committee." Dietzgen thereupon attacked the committee and the *Sozialist* in the *Arbeiterzeitung*.

On June 9, 1886, he wrote to a friend:—

"I call myself an Anarchist in this quotation, and the passage left out explains what I mean by Anarchism. I define it in a more congenial sense than is usually done. According to me—and I am at one in this with all the better and best comrades—we shall not arrive at the new society without serious troubles. I even think that we shall not get along without wild disturbances, without 'Anarchy.' I believe that 'Anarchy' will be the stage of transition. Dyed-in-the-wool Anarchists pretend that Anarchism is the final stage of Society. To that extent they are rattle brains who think they are the most radical people. But we are the real radicals who work for the Communist order above and beyond Anarchism. The final aim is socialist order, not anarchist disorder.

"If the Chicago comrades would now avail themselves of the state of affairs in their city, I could help them considerably. The Anarchists would then join our ranks and would form, together with the best socialists of all countries, a united and active troop, before which such weaklings as Stiebeling, Fabian, Vogt, Viereck, and others would be dispersed and forced to crawl under cover. For this reason, I think, the terms anarchist, socialist, communist, should be mixed together so that no muddle head could tell which is which.

"Language serves not only the purpose of distinguishing things, but also of uniting them, for it is dialectic. The words, and the intellect which gives meaning to language cannot do anything else but give us a picture of things. Hence man may use them freely, so long as he accomplishes his purpose."

Dietzgen's last words on the subject were penned a few days before his death, in a letter dated April 9, 1888, to his friend in the east:—

"I am still satisfied with my approach to the Anarchists, and am convinced that I have accomplished some good by it."

PENDING EXECUTION

Lombroso enquired whether, according to the charlatan rules of his pseudo-physiognomy, the Chicago Anarchists were criminals. We prefer the testimony of Captain Black, who was their principal advocate, that they were men. On the morning that they were declared guilty by the packed jury in the packed court, Black saw the prisoners immediately upon their return to jail. He was impressed by their calm, fearless, and contented bearing.

Adolph Fischer, who towered above his comrades, said to Black, with the utmost simplicity, and with a smile that lighted up his entire face, that he was not surprised at the verdict, and did not mind if the authorities hanged him on the morrow. He added, "*I am ready to die for the cause of the people.*"

The idea of witnessing unto death for the cause which he had at heart filled him with a contented gladness.

Louis Lingg, also, smiled at the thought of death, and considered it inevitable from the first day of the trial.

George Engel was the oldest man in this group of martyrs by many years, and Black always wondered how he had become an Anarchist. Engel impressed Black with "his absolute sincerity in all that he did and said."

Spies' plea to Governor Oglesby to be the sacrifice of the hour, and to save Parsons from his doom, impressed Black as being typical of the man. It expressed his character and motives.

Parsons was Black's chief concern. His case was outstanding. His execution was the most heinous of all. Black was "anxious to save out of the wreck whatever life was possible," and even people who agreed with the verdict, and were against the Anarchists, felt that Parsons should not be executed, since he came voluntarily to the bar of the court. They argued that even a Drumhead Court-Martial would never inflict the death sentence under such circumstances. It was understood that this sentence would be commuted if Parsons would sign a petition to the Governor of the State, which, under the constitution and the statutes of the State of Illinois, was prescribed as a condition of the exercise of pardoning power. *Parsons refused to sign any such petition.* He refused to desert his comrades who were doomed by such petitioning. He declined to make any technical compliance with the law that had doomed them. Either his comrades must be pardoned with him or he would hang with them, so far as his personal will could affect the result. That was his uncompromising and unhesitating resolution.

And so Parsons died, with his comrades, to witness to the cause and to the faith of Labour!

Black adds:—

"Of such make were these men as I learned to know them in the months intervening between their arrest and their execution."

He concludes:—

"I have thought always that, if these men could be known by others as I knew them, those who came thus to know them would understand why my whole heart was in the struggle for their deliverance."

WITHOUT PREJUDICE: A JUDGE'S APOLOGY

(In telling the story of the Chicago martyrs, in a previous chapter, we mentioned the article contributed to the *Century Magazine*, New York, for April, 1893, by the Hon. Joseph E. Gary, the judge who presided at the trial. Unfortunately for Gary's ravings in defence of "law and order," two months later, Governor Altgeld released the three victims of the trial who were imprisoned still, and declared that the eight Anarchists convicted were the victims of false condemnation, insufficient evidence, a packed and legally incompetent jury, and a partial judge. The following essay is an analysis of Gary's apology.)

Gary opens his apology with a magnificent appeal of dramatic mediocrity to conventional respectability. His very first sentence assures one that he is thoroughly orthodox in superstition, superior to all suggestion of spiritual vision, an enemy not only of class-war agitators but of New England philosophers. His love of minor detail makes one wonder whether such accuracy was not assumed in order to conceal his deficiency of regard for more important fact. The reader would discover the path to justice. The honourable essayist loses him in the woods of accident. But let him speak for himself:—

"On the morning of Friday, the twentieth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, twelve men, ranging in age from fifty-three years downward to early manhood, walked two by two from the Revere house, a hotel in the city of Chicago, to the building in which the criminal court of Cook County held its sessions. The hotel is on the south-east corner of Clark and Michigan Street, and the Courthouse was—it has been torn down to be replaced by a better—on the north side of Michigan Street, a little east of the hotel. The men were guarded from all communication with any person by a bailiff of that court at each end of the short procession which their ranks composed."

It needs no practical judgment to realise the weighty and even pointed significance of every word in this precious piece of descriptive writing. We are impressed because the writer assures us that it was "the morning of Friday," instead of casually dismissing the time and date as "Friday morning." Then the event occurred in no mere "year 1886 of the Christian era"! It did not happen even

in "A.D. 1886." But it was "in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six." This is convincing. We conjure up pictures of Dionysus—the sixth century ecclesiastical forger who commenced the practice of dating the years after the falsely computed date of Christ's nativity—and we feel certain that on so augustly described a year as that "of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six" only sincere and truthful men could have stalked abroad! Of course, had it been only "A.D. 1886" or "the year 1886 of the Christian era" our certitude might have been less dogmatic.

Judge Gary's charming evidence of these twelve men's absolute fidelity to truth does not end here. Had they walked one by one, we might have suspected them of duplicity, or have indicted them for a conspiracy to promote error. But they walked two by two! This argues a severity of mind which puts all doubt of their honesty and perfect impartiality out of the question. The name of their hotel, its situation a little west of the Courthouse, also betokens their possession of the qualities mentioned. Had it been to the east, doubt might have overtaken our good sense. But it was not. So all fear is put aside. Finally, they were guarded in front and behind by a court bailiff. Their procession was a veritable walking Eden, into which no devil could penetrate. He might dwell beyond it at either end. Into it, he could not go. Compared to these twelve men, the twelve apostles are puny mortals of the lowest description. Contrasted against that Courthouse-to-hotel promenade in Chicago of Gary's famous "year of our Lord" in question, the path from Nazareth to Jerusalem was but a miserable sinner's highway. And it would be criminal indeed to stand further between the reader's pleasure and the narrative of the historian of so sacred a walk!

Gary proceeds to state "the case of the Anarchists was on trial," and that "these men"—whom he names—"were the jurors selected and sworn to try the issue between the people of the State of Illinois and" the aforesaid Anarchists, whom he names also. He then names the counsel on both sides and mentions his own presidency as judge. The defendants were accused of the murder of Mathias J. Degan, on May 4th, 1886.

With that air of candour, never to be extolled sufficiently, Gary continues:—

"The short journey that these jurors were then making was the last one of the many they made over the same route; every day, except Sundays, from the fourteenth day of July preceding, they had several times each day, under like restraint by the watchfulness of the bailiffs, paced to and fro between the hotel and the Courthouse; and some of them had done so from the twenty-first day of the month before, on which day the trial began. Twenty-one days passed away in selecting the jury; 981 men were called to the chairs where the jury sat, and were sworn and questioned, before the dozen who tried the case were accepted. At all times, the dozen chairs were kept full, and when a man went into one of them he

became a close prisoner, not to be released until he was rejected as unfit to serve on the jury; or, if he became one of the chosen twelve, not until he and his fellows gave the final verdict."

Here we have an excellence of incidence which is a veritable moving picture. We have no thought for the men on trial. Their sufferings are of too small moment to play any part in the "movie" before us. It is of the jury we think. What weary plodding, what devoted patience, is theirs! And yet the detail is not complete. Indeed, not to impeach the writer, but only to express a fact, his candour is not devoid of a fault whose Latin description in English translation is known as *the suppression of truth*.

For example, Gary dwells on the length of time it took to empanel the jury. He implies that every consideration was shown to the defence, whose challenging thus lengthened the proceedings. He omits to state that, of the 981 men called to the jury chairs, *only four or five belonged to the Labour class. These were all challenged by the States' Attorney and rejected by the judge.* Gary dwells on the isolation of the jurymen from all contamination of prejudice. He omits to state that most of them declared their prejudice against Anarchists and Socialists, and that he, as judge, maintained that that fact was no evidence of their partiality. He fails to mention that one talesman stated that he had conceived and expressed an opinion that the defendants were guilty. This gentleman confessed that he was not prepared to deliver the accused to freedom, if the prosecuting evidence failed; but that he considered them so guilty, that he was not prepared to acquit them unless overwhelming evidence of their innocence was forthcoming. By exercising great pressure, Judge Gary persuaded him to acknowledge that he thought "perhaps he might be able" to put this prejudice aside, and act entirely on evidence. Accordingly, Gary declared him competent. This was one of the worthies whose blessed freedom from all bias and suggestion Gary has eulogised in the passages cited.

Yet the judge who presided at the Chicago trial was an honourable man. He was an upright judge. Funny, how, with such a mind for detail, he should have omitted the few facts outlined in the foregoing comment!

Another error of omission strikes us. Gary has told us of the court bailiffs, until we look upon them as walking pillars of supremacy, cold impassive righteousness. Gary tells us the names of jurymen, prosecuting and defending counsel, witnesses, Anarchist writers and agitators, the defendants. But so great are these bailiffs, that he would seem to dread to dwell upon their names. Are they not the very guardian angels of veracity and justice? Yet one was named Henry Ryce, and he told well-known men in Chicago that he was managing the case and knew what he was about; that these fellows should hang as sure as death, and that he was summon-

ing only such men as jurors as would be acceptable to the prosecution!

As became a judge, Gary, penning his apology, thought it wisdom to ignore such details. He considered it dignity to compete on this wise with junior reporters handling their first "descriptive special":—

"On all former occasions when the jurors were on the street, they had conversed with one another, had looked about them, at the people, at the buildings, at the trifling incidents of street life. On this morning, each man walked in silence; turning his eyes neither to right nor left, he avoided all recognition of any acquaintance who might be in the multitude that filled the street."

We will spare the reader the judge's description of the thronged street, the concentrated gaze and painful anxiety of Christendom, and the jury's complete ignorance of such universal interest. But we would like to know how a judge, so completely ignorant of the avowed partiality of the jurors, was so thoroughly well informed on the subject of their conduct on a street parade? Was it his function to play spy and to watch them daily? How did he know that they had conversed with each other on every former occasion? How did he know of their complete silence and hang-dog appearance of self-shame in this "morning of Friday, the twentieth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six? And what did such conduct—so mysteriously noted by a judge whose play was *not* spying from the sidewalk—prove anyway? If a sense of solemnity on this day, surely a grave want of gravity on all the former days, and an ascertained want of mental balance and judgment generally! Or was it a fear to record a cooked verdict now that the moment to act on their criminal conspiracy had arrived? Was each man ashamed to look his fellow in the face, to find the stones in mutiny, and to see shame staring at him everywhere?

The total impossibility of such an event—always bearing in mind the facts with which we have qualified Gary's narrative—is evident from the writer's repeated assurance:—

"The jurors had no access, either by newspapers or conversation, to any source of information, being at all times either in court, in a room set apart for them in the Courthouse, in a suite of rooms at the hotel, or in a body taking exercise on the streets: and, always, when not in court, guarded by bailiffs. The counsel engaged in the case were fully occupied, when out of court, preparing for the work next session. I read the papers very little, and declined all conversation upon the subject which occupied my business hours."

This passage convinces us that Gary would have made a fortune as the writer of detective stories. Perhaps he did write some of the five and fifteen cent editions of *Nick Carter*, published so widely by Messrs. Street and Smith of New York. Or else, he may have contributed to the wonders of the magic circle, and have in-

spired secretly the apparently miraculous impossibilities with the performance of which the audience at the London St. George's Hall were wont to be charmed. Anyway, there can be no doubt that Gary, in writing his apology, was chuckling at his ability to state a mystery: to dwell on unimportant circumstances whilst concealing essential fact; and to urge the poser: "Ladies and gentlemen, the thing was done, you see it was impossible of accomplishment. Say, how did it happen?"

When the author of a detective novel assures us all his characters are innocent, we enjoy the situations because of its delicious falseness. When Devant shows us that his tricks are performed without trickery we applaud his splendid insincerity. When Gary explains how utterly impossible it was for a biased jury to be prejudiced whilst watched by corrupted bailiffs, we like hugely the wit of the man. But we want laughter without tears, and comedy unrounded by tragedy. The Chicago business was hardly that. A judge cannot be expected to note the difference.

Gary proceeds to define the dimensions of the Courtroom, and the situation of galleries. He mentions that he kept these closed and empty except upon one afternoon, the events of which he details later in his narrative. He adds, how, at the beginning of each session, he announced that no person would be permitted to stand in the Courtroom, except in the way of duty; that no one could lounge on railings, or on the arms of seats, but that every spectator must be down in a seat, or leave the room. Also that there must be no talking, whispering, or laughing, or any token of approval or censure.

Truly, a just judge come to deliver judgment! But watch the sequel:—

"Reluctantly, when Mr. Grinnell was about to begin his closing argument to the jury, at the solicitation, without his knowledge, of many of the bailiffs in attendance, and upon their assurances that they could prevent all disorder, I permitted the galleries to be opened. As soon as people began to enter them, I received a note from Mrs. Black, wife of the leading counsel for the defence—she being constantly in attendance—stating that many persons had desired to hear his speech and had been prevented, as they could not get into the Courtroom, and asking if I thought it was fair to open the galleries for an audience that had been excluded when her husband spoke. I recognised the justness of her complaint, and, calling Mr. Black to the bench, showed him the note of his wife, and offered to clear the galleries and to shut them up again if he preferred that it should be done. He thought it not worth while, but the event showed how unwise it was to open them."

Grinnell was the State Attorney, and the gallery is opened to admit an audience to hear his speech at the request of the bailiffs admittedly—though Gary conceals the fact—opposed to the defendants. The judge consents, though he confessed to have kept out any audience that wished to hear Black, the leading attorney for

the defence, speak. In all this conduct there was no intentional partiality, not even judicial tactlessness? When Mrs. Black remarks on the unfairness, Gary is not turned from his purpose. He achieves it, by throwing the onus of deciding on the man he has treated wrongly, feeling sure that the latter, thus challenged, must generously give way to the injustice. Seven years later, writing an apology for his conduct, Gary follows up a complacent record of his infamy by affecting to discover the unwisdom of his own conspiracy. The event to which he refers above is described thus in the paragraph which follows immediately:—

"During his speech, Mr. Grinnell made some impassioned exclamation—I do not recall the words—to the effect that nobody feared Anarchists, at which a storm of applause broke out in the east gallery. A futile attempt was made to discover who began it, and after some delay Mr. Grinnell proceeded without further interruption."

Consider the circumstances and character of the applause, and then say, if you can, that you are surprised at learning of the futility of the attempt to discover the source of the applause? In other words, the court confesses, through the medium of Judge Gary's apology, that the only occasion on which the gallery was open, it was, like the jury, "a packed" affair.

Gary's article dwindles down to a yellow press pot-boiler. We do not propose to follow him in his quotations from the *Alarm*, the *Arbeiter*, or *Die Fackel*, the speeches of the defendants, or the writings of Most or Bakunin. These questions of reform versus revolution, of violence or non-violence are of too general and too important an interest, to be considered as attributes of Gary's vision. They are fundamental like justice: whereas he is incidental like his office. Our concern has been to air his judicial understanding of the nature of prejudice. That done, the present labourer's task is ended.

The Physiognomy of Social Revolution

The Chicago martyrdoms inspired Cesare Lombroso, the criminologist, to contribute an interesting essay to the columns of *The Monist*, for April, 1891, on the theme, "The Physiognomy of the Anarchists." The most interesting feature of the essay was its exposure of the ignorance that passed muster for criminology, a pseudo-science of patho-psychology, invented in the interests of bourgeois society.

Lombroso claimed that criminal anthropology was a science on the ground that vice, crime, and brutality very often find a characteristic expression of face. But the relationship is not exact, because there is and can be no exact standard of judgment. The physiologists judge inaccurately and falsely. And, like their victims, their attitude towards life is dictated by economic conditions. Criminal anthropology is merely a bourgeois pretence and hypocrisy.

Lombroso makes an interesting distinction between "true revolution" and mere "rebellion." He claimed that criminal anthropology supplied:—

"a method for distinguishing *true revolution always fruitful and useful*, from Utopia or rebellion, which is always sterile. . . . True revolutionists—that is to say, the initiators of great scientific and political revolutions, who excite and bring about a true progress in humanity—are almost always geniuses or saints, and have all a marvellously harmonious physiognomy."

Lombroso instanced the noble physiognomies of Marx, Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Lassalle, among others. But does this not instance the danger of a criminologist dabbling in politics? Marx was a magnificent critic of political economy and to some extent a social prophet. But he was dominated personally by terrible ambition, which does not make for harmony of mind or thought, and should have found expression in his physiognomy. Mazzini has many excellent qualities as a man, but was not his United Italy activity finally sterile. Garibaldi was a great soldier of freedom, but his efforts ended in sterile patriotism. Lassalle's career was a conceit and his contribution to working-class organisation a colossal pretence.

Lombroso notes the large forehead, the bushy beard, the large soft eyes, the well-developed jaw, and the pale face. But here he sins against fashion, and perhaps common sense. The bushy beard no longer argues a noble physiognomy but disease-carrying fungus. And it can always conceal a weak jaw. Lombroso does not find these features in all the Anarchists. But since they do not exist in other folks either, the argument seems a little barren, and the deduction not too obvious.

Out of all this pretence of criminal anthropological knowledge, there emerges only one useful point, the differentiation between the fruitfulness of true revolution and the sterility of mere rebellion. One did not need to be a criminologist to remark this difference. But one does need intelligence to apply this distinction. Lombroso reveals only his prejudice in endeavouring to apply it. He found the criminal type 2 per cent. *less* among the Italian revolutionists than among normal men. He found the criminal type 5 per cent. *more* among the Russian Nihilists than among normal men. He found the criminal type 6 per cent. more among the Paris Communards than among the Russian Nihilists. And he found 10 per cent. of the remainder of the Communards to be insane. Passing to the regicides and presidenticides, Lombroso instances "the monsters of the French Revolution" and finds them to be nearly all of the criminal type. But the French Revolution was one of the most fruitful events in the history of the world. It is hard to accept the criminal classification of Marat, when one knows his history. Lombroso reaches the climax of his prejudice when, after an arbitrary classification and observation, he finds the criminal type to be 34 per cent. among the Anarchists.

Lombroso discovered the physiognomy of Schnaubelt, who seems to have been the agent employed by the authorities to throw the bomb to be very fine. It matters little, after this tribute to a spy and agent provocateur, that Lombroso discovers the physiognomies of Parsons and Neebe to be "very noble and truly genial." Especially when, in the same breath, Lombroso considers Waller and Seliger, former comrades of the martyrs, turned perjured informers from fear of the gallows and hope of gain, to possess "fine physiognomies" also. Obviously, "fine and noble physiognomy" is a dangerous and futile classification. And the man who substitutes it for economics is engaging in charlatanism and pseudo-science. Criminal anthropology is the astrology of sociology, whereas we are seeking the astronomy. It is the dying conjuring of witchcraft and demonology, clad in the borrowed wardrobe of science.

An unskilful surgeon made John Most's face unsymmetric. Most was hounded down and hated by the authorities for his stern and unbending loyalty to the cause of the Chicago martyrs. He figured in Schaack's book accordingly as a wild and dangerous Anarchist. Lombroso looked at the picture and concluded that "*Most has acrocephaly and facial unsymmetry.*" In other words Most was high-skulled and his features disproportionate. Therefore, his mind was unbalanced. But nature never gave Most an unpleasant face. It was a doctor.

August Spies was of a very tender nature, and his compassion for all who suffered was a byword with his comrades. Compassion as well as justice made him more concerned with the fate of Parsons than with his own doom. But Spies was born in a chateau cele-

brated for feudal robberies—called on that account, the *Raubschloss*. And Lombroso, the criminologist, discovered a connection between this fact and the other one, that Spies was converted twenty years later to Socialism in America.

Lombroso complained of the morbid physiognomy of August Spies, basing his opinion upon a picture published in Schaack's book. In a footnote, Lombroso admitted that this picture was not true to life and that the features upon which his opinion was founded, did not exist. This did not prevent Lombroso from stating that "the physiognomy of Spies," in the inaccurate picture, "corresponds with his autobiography, written with a fierce fanaticism"! Which, of course is science and a study in values!

Lombroso finds that Fielden has a wild and sensual physiognomy, a turned-up nose, and protruding jaws. But Fielden's employers considered him a harmless enthusiast of an amiable nature, and never suspected of any criminal disposition. It was admitted, even by the prosecution, that he had become entangled in the Anarchist prosecution by a strange concatenation of circumstances. And even Judge Gary, Anarchist-hater and sensation-monger, witnessed, in a letter to Governor Oglesby, that Fielden's faults consisted of "a natural love of justice, an impatience at all undeserved suffering" Otherwise, Gary found Fielden "the honest, industrious, and peaceable labouring man." On his release by Altgeld in 1893, Fielden settled with his family on a farm in Colorado, and certainly betrayed no criminal impulses.

Connecting Fielden with the well-known M.P., who was related slightly to his father, and with whom Fielden in his youth probably did associate, Lombroso unfolds his theory of the criminal consequence of genius:—

"I have proved how often genius is nervous epilepsy, and how almost all the sons of men of genius are lunatics, idiots or criminals."

This statement is, of course, absurd, and is rebuked by facts. The Darwin family has been famous for over two hundred and fifty years. The sons of Hegel and Schelling were able men. The Huxley family is more famous in the third generation than in its original outstanding representative, the immortal Thomas Henry Huxley. John Stuart Mill was the famous son of James Mill. Genius, and the posterity of genius, often go to the wall. *But the explanation is to be found in external circumstances, in economic conditions.*

Lombroso discovered "a Mongolic cast of feature" in Engel and Lingg, and concluded that they were, therefore, degenerative in character. Lingg's oblique eyes offended him particularly. He discovered them both to have been driven to political action by "a truly ungovernable epileptoid idea." Enthusiasm possessed them like a disease.

The truth is Engel joined the Socialists at an advanced age. In his earlier years he was an Anti-Socialist. On his first arrest he was released upon the good word of Coroner Herg, who declared that he had known Engel for years as a quiet and well-behaved citizen.

Lingg was only 23 years of age. And youth is sometimes moved by an enthusiasm that lapses with years. Certainly his character was not matured nor his ideas tested at this age. What does one know of life at 23?

This consideration, although noted, moved Lombroso less than the fact that the ears were protruding, and were without lobes, in the case of Lingg, Spies, Fischer, and Engel. He was determined to treat politics as a physiognomy instead of an economy: an individual and not a social problem.

Thus Booth, who murdered Lincoln, was given by his father the name Wilkes, and the father's own name was Junius Brutus. Which proves (says Lombroso) hereditary! Incidentally, Lombroso declares that Wilkes was "a revolutionist"! Which Wilkes *certainly was not!*

All this fun and criminal anthropological moonshine Lombroso discovered in Schaack's *Anarchy and Anarchists*, Chicago, 1889. He found this work "very partial but rich in facts." Its pictures were all wrong and its biographies paid little heed to truth. Schwab rightly termed this book "*a fictitious robber-story*," containing "untruths absolutely invented for ornament and decoration."

Michael Schwab, whose death sentence was commuted on petition to imprisonment, published this comment on Lombroso's essay in an article written from the Joliet Penitentiary, and contributed to the *Monist* for July, 1891. At that time Schwab had served five out of his fifteen years' penal servitude, for an offence of which, in common with his comrades, he was innocent, and was within two years of receiving the famous Altgeld pardon, which exonerated him and his comrades. Incidentally, this pardon demolished Lombroso's physiognomy of crime explanation of the Chicago bombing, since it declared the outrage to be on the other side of the question, the State side!

But even if it had been possible to have conceded the accuracy of Lombroso's blundering theory, as Schwab wrote, "he necessarily failed from the insufficiency of his materials," as regards accurate biographical data, and the fact that "the portraits from which he made his deduction," were "not sufficiently truthful for his purpose."

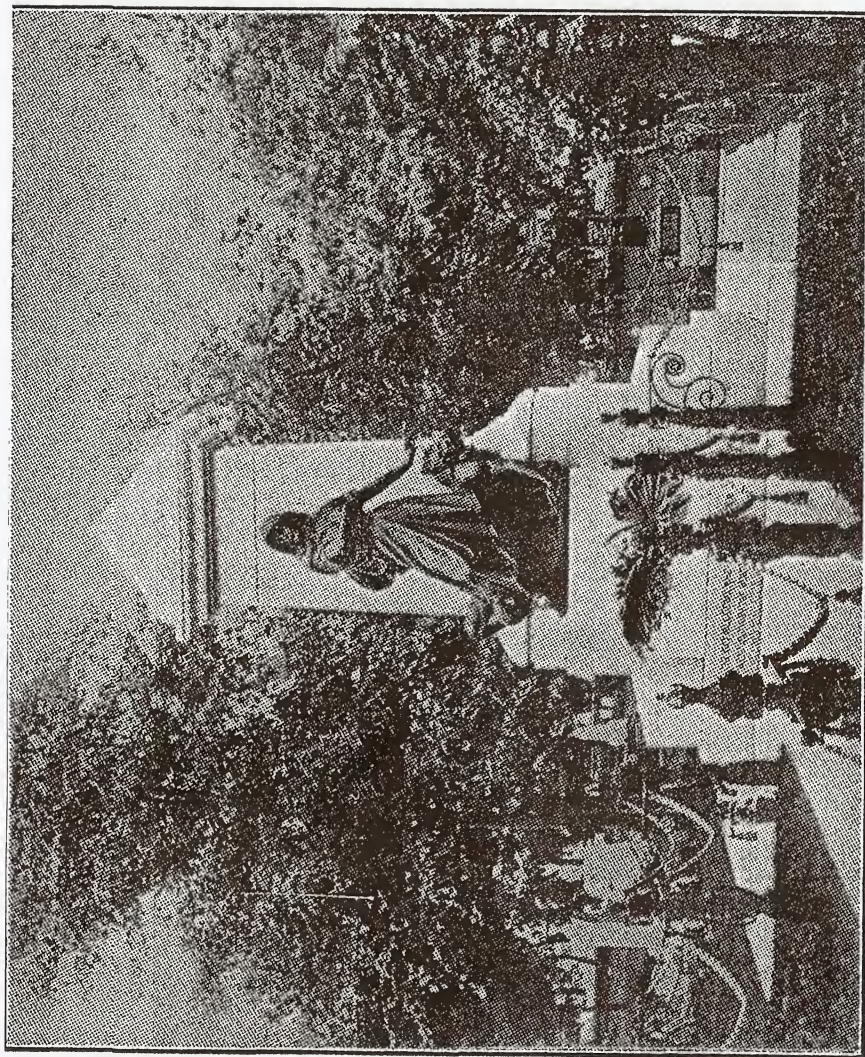
Schwab added to this criticism the following excellent reflection:—

"It is in the highest degree improbable that such a book should not have caricatured the portraits of the Anarchists. In books designed for sale to the masses, the illustrations are not, as a rule, of any value as works of art, even if the persons pictured in them enjoy the author's favour."

Lombroso lends point to this comment, and invalidates all his "shocker" reasoning about the physiognomy of the Anarchists, when he says:—

"I repeat that among the anarchists there are no true criminals; even Schaack, the police historian, can name but two criminals, and certainly he would not have spared them if he could have stigmatised them. Their heroic-like deaths, with their ideal on their lips, proves that they were not common criminals."

Which ends the discussion. Obviously, there is no exact physiognomy of crime, and no physiognomy of social revolution. It is a question of social and political economy, sociology versus physiognomy. Nero tuned whilst Rome burned: and Lombroso enjoyed a minor harmony whilst civilisation wasted. History never records tragedy without mockery and every crisis has its burlesque. Criminology is the burlesque of property—which is robbery and infamy. Socialism will end the mean and intolerable farce.



Chicago Anarchist Memorial, Waldheim Cemetery, Chicago.

Hobnail Press: Publishing with Radical Intent

Hobnail Press was founded in 2003. It is an independent, not-for-profit, radical publishing initiative. All labour is freely donated and all proceeds from sales support future publishing ventures, unless otherwise designated.

The primary focus of Hobnail Press is to publish and disseminate information pertaining to small press and alternative publishing, from an anti-authoritarian and libertarian-left perspective. An intrinsic part of this process is the publication of Hobnail Review, a regular review and listings newsletter.

In the tradition of radical pamphleteering, Hobnail Press also publishes a diverse range of low-cost, readily-available and easily-accessible pamphlets; reprinting essays and extracts from the work of 19th and early to mid 20th century freethinkers and radicals; as well as documenting events and scenarios influenced by their message of revolutionary change. A message, largely unchanged by the passage of time, which remains of historical, social, economic and political relevance to working class people today. Hobnail Press believes that reclaiming the past is the key to building the future.

All pamphlets are published in good-faith as an educational medium. As part of this evolutionary process, Hobnail Press endeavours to engender increased awareness, class-consciousness, self-esteem and empowerment. Contemporary analysis and application is at the discretion of the reader.

This pamphlet is a facsimile reproduction of an essay penned by the indomitable Guy Aldred, and published in 1940 by the *Word Library*, as part of a series entitled, *Pioneers of Anti-Parliamentarism*.

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